

Information for Faculty

1. PURPOSE and CONTEXT of MANUAL

As part of its mission to cultivate excellence in learning and teaching, Georgia Southwestern State University (GSW) offers both courses and degree programs in which the majority of the instructional interaction occurs when student and instructor are separated geographically. Specific courses and programs are selected for offering through distance learning methods to provide greater access to GSW programs by providing scheduling flexibility to all potential students, but especially to adult learners with job and family responsibilities that may otherwise limit their educational opportunities. Only courses and programs for which the learning outcomes can be effectively achieved through distance learning methods are selected. This manual is intended to ensure that all GSW distance learning course and programs conform to best practices in distance education, and the policies articulated in this manual apply to all distance learning courses and programs offered by GSW.

1.1. DEFINING DISTANCE LEARNING

This university defines distance learning as a formal educational process in which the majority of the instructional interaction occurs when student and instructor are separated geographically. Such instruction may be synchronous or asynchronous, and may include the use of electronic correspondence; audio, video, or computer technologies.

1.2. DELINEATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES

The following groups bear specific interlocking responsibilities for distance learning at GSW.

1.2.1. Administrative Responsibilities

- To provide ongoing financial, technical, and personnel support for the development, and continuation of the distance learning program subject to budgetary constraints.
- To ensure reasonable and adequate access to a range of appropriate academic support services and resources.
- To ensure assessment of distance learning courses and programs.
- To develop processes to ensure the integrity of student work

1.2.2. Academic Unit Responsibilities

- To propose distance learning courses and programs.
- To develop and schedule of distance learning courses and programs.
- To assess distance learning courses and programs.
- To provide academic advisement to distance learning students.

- To develop processes to ensure the integrity of student work
- To apply GSW's substantive change policy when creating distance learning courses and programs

1.2.3. Information and Instructional Technology

- To provide a secure computer network ensuring the integrity and privacy of the communications and records exchanged.
- To provide technical support for distance learning instruction.
- To support and promote technological infrastructure for exclusively online programs and all other distance learning courses.

1.2.4. Faculty Responsibilities

- To exercise control over distance learning, ensuring both the rigor of programs and the quality of instruction.
- To develop and design courses that utilize the advantages of the delivery medium to achieve course objectives.
- To follow GSW policy and procedure in development, scheduling, and presentation of distance learning courses.
- To design distance learning instruction that meets the same standards and criteria set for traditional campus-based courses.
- To participate in curriculum development, coordination of syllabi for courses taught by multiple instructors, and preparation of examinations, as required.
- To order any textbooks and supplementary materials that are necessary.
- To design and grade student projects, assignments, and tests in accordance with a schedule which has been communicated to students.
- To implement processes to ensure the integrity of student work.
- To provide for and maintain regular appropriate interaction with distance learning students.
- To support and adhere to the Georgia Southwestern State University Computer and Network Usage Policy and other related university policies.
- To observe copyright laws and guidelines as they pertain to the Internet, the World Wide Web, software, and the use and reproduction of materials.
- To secure copyright clearances on any copyright-protected materials used in distance learning course development.

- To participate in GSW's assessment of the distance learning.

1.2.5. Student Responsibilities

- To ascertain possession of the appropriate skills, competency levels, course prerequisites, and equipment (including browser, operating system, and software) required for the distance learning course.
- To determine that the course meets individual degree requirements.
- To assume responsibility for contacting assigned advisor/instructor.
- To complete all assigned coursework by deadlines and before the end of the semester.
- To participate in the evaluation of the course content.
- To follow all relevant university guidelines, including the student code of conduct and academic integrity policy.
- To read and adhere to Georgia Southwestern State University Computer and Network Usage Policy and other related university policies.
- To observe copyright laws and guidelines as they pertain to the Internet, the World Wide Web, software, and the use and reproduction of materials.

1.2.6. James Earl Carter Library

- To facilitate the provision of library services and resources for distance learning faculty and students.
- To encourage development of technologically advanced remote access to library resources.
- To coordinate development and provision of appropriate information technology instruction for distance learners.
- To coordinate the planning, evaluation, and improvement of library services for distance learners.
- To promote use of library resources among distance learning faculty and students.

1.2.7. Committee on Academic Affairs

- To approve the addition, revision, and deletion of undergraduate distance learning courses and programs
- To approve the conversion of existing undergraduate courses and programs to distance learning
- To monitor the assessment of general education courses delivered through distance learning

1.2.8. Committee on Graduate Affairs

- To approve the addition, revision, and deletion of graduate distance learning courses and programs
- To approve the conversion of existing graduate courses and programs to distance learning

2 GENERAL DISTANCE LEARNING POLICIES and PROCEDURES

2.1. Application of Academic Policies to Distance Learning Courses and Programs

The same policies concerning admissions requirements, academic standards, academic integrity, dropping and adding classes, repetition of courses, incomplete designations, withdrawal from a course or from the University, classification, grading, grievance procedures, credits, degree completion, and honors apply to distance learning as for campus-based classes, unless specifically stipulated otherwise (See the current Georgia Southwestern Bulletin.). The learning outcomes for distance learning courses and programs are identical to those offered on campus, although instructional strategies will necessarily differ. Faculty members apply the same standards for coursework and grading for both on-campus and distance learning courses. The academic policies that are specific to distance learning courses and programs are discussed below in section 2.5. As with on-campus courses, distance learning courses must maintain sufficient enrollment to be taught and are subject to the same course deletion policies as are all courses offered by the university.

In addition, all distance learning courses and programs at GSW must comply with the requirements, standards, and policies of both the University System of Georgia (USG), and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACS-COC)

2.2. Development of Distance Learning Courses and Programs

Since distance learning courses may, and distance learning programs will require either notifying or seeking approval from both the USG and SACS-COC, developers should consult with the Office of Academic Affairs and GSW's SACS-COC Liaison before beginning to develop distance learning courses or programs.

2.2.1. Development of Distance Learning Courses

Unless the course is being developed for a completely new online program with no on-campus equivalent at GSW, all new online courses will be based on currently approved courses taught on campus. In most cases, therefore, there will be an approved course outline for both the on-campus and the distance learning version of a course.

- Distance learning courses offered at GSW must be courses developed by GSW faculty, or by professionally produced programs licensed through the Public Broadcasting System, Adult Learning Services or some other professional organization/agency and facilitated by faculty at GSW. The use of professionally produced courses must proceed through the same approval processes discussed in section 2.3.
- Since the course learning outcomes for distance learning courses must be identical to those offered on campus, development should begin with a consideration of what instructional strategies will be necessary to achieve the desired outcomes in the distance learning

environment. Developers converting an existing course to distance delivery should consult the approved course outline for the on-campus version for the course to find the approved course learning outcomes.

- Developers should carefully consider how to incorporate the following best practices of distance course design into their courses.
- Each course should have an introduction that includes, if applicable, a course description, faculty contact information (Including a statement on how long students should expect to get a reply from you), required and recommended textbooks, course learning outcomes, an explanation of course organization, the grading policy, a description of all exams, descriptions of term papers/projects, directions on how to access the course schedule, research information and links to library resources, a description of netiquette, a description of academic integrity policy for the course, advice on how to succeed in an online course, links to relevant student policies for withdraw, technical requirements for the course, any downloads or plug-ins necessary for the course, technical support contact info, and a description of support for students with disabilities. This introduction should also include a welcome message from the instructor, as well as a specific section that details expectations for success in the course. The course introduction might also include exercises to ensure that students know how to use course tools.
- Developers should include a learning activity or assessment to comply with the distance learning policy discussed in section 2.5.1 of this manual.
- Each course should be well-organized with a common structure to units, if possible, and be easily navigable
- Documents and web pages in the course should have consistent appearance
- Courses need to comply with Federal Regulation 503 regarding access for students with disabilities
- Developers should create a discussion topic specifically devoted to questions, and provide a FAQ page
- Try to ensure that course can be used by all students with only a dial-up Internet connection and an out of date computer system, if possible. Sophisticated hardware or a high speed Internet connection may be required if necessary to meet the course learning outcomes, but students should be made aware of such requirements at registration.
- Course units should begin with an overview that describes the outcomes, learning activities, and assessments for the unit.
- Overviews should also connect current unit to earlier units, and make students aware of how learning activities and assessments in unit connect to course level and unit level learning outcomes.
- Developers should structure learning activities to encourage instructor to student, and student to student interactions.

- Developers should include model learning activity submissions, and rubrics that will be used to evaluate learning activities and other assessments.
- Course content should be broken into readable chunks rather than creating documents and web pages that are more than a couple of pages or screens long.
- Developers should include learning activities that take advantage of different learning styles
- Developers should include optional additional learning activities from the Internet, when possible, such as textbook websites.
- Developers should comply with fair use doctrine when adding course materials. When in doubt, leave it out (or get permission to use)!
- Ownership of distance learning courses are subject to the provisions of GSW's Intellectual Property Policy [add link when ready].

2.2.2. Development of Distance Learning Programs

Since Distance Learning Programs leading to a degree will require approval from both the USG and SACS-COC, the following considerations should be taken into account when during development:

- program description and objectives
- program's fit with institutional mission
- program justification, including need for online program in addition to on-campus program (if applicable)
- curriculum
- admissions criteria
- assistantship availability (if applicable)
- program learning outcomes
- program assessment plan
- program administration
- degree credit-hour waiver (if applicable)
- projected enrollments
- faculty inventory and workload, including faculty experience in distance learning delivery
- fiscal and facilities impact with estimated budget

2.3. Approval of Distance Learning Courses and Programs

2.3.1. Approval of Distance Learning Courses

All distance learning courses must be approved by the appropriate faculty committee: the Committee on Academic Affairs for undergraduate courses and the Committee on Graduate Affairs for graduate courses. In addition, distance learning courses that may be taken by candidates in a teacher certification program must be approved by the Teacher Education Council. Forms for approval and more specific directions for submission may be found on [the Academic Approval Process page](#). All distance learning courses are potentially substantive changes under SACS-COC policy, and are therefore subject to GSW's substantive change policy (link policy when up). All proposals for distance learning courses must be reviewed by GSW's SACS-COC Liaison before submission to the appropriate faculty committee(s).

2.3.2. Approval of Distance Learning Programs

All distance learning programs must be approved by the appropriate faculty committee: the Committee on Academic Affairs for undergraduate courses and the Committee on Graduate Affairs for graduate courses. In addition, teacher certification programs designed for distance delivery must be approved by the Teacher Education Council. Forms for approval and more specific directions for submission may be found on [the Academic Approval Process page](#). All distance learning programs are substantive changes under SACS-COC policy, and are therefore subject to GSW's substantive change policy (link policy when up). All proposals for distance learning programs must be reviewed by GSW's SACS-COC Liaison before submission to the appropriate faculty committee(s).

2.4. Assessment of Distance Learning Courses and Programs

The cornerstone of assessment of distance learning courses and programs is learning outcomes, and therefore, assessment plans for distance learning courses and programs should be based on the same learning outcomes and outcome measures with the same results targets as those used for the same on-campus courses and programs. However, since instructional strategies used for distance delivery often differ from those used in on-campus courses and programs, the responses to assessment results may differ, as well.

2.4.1. Annual Assessment

Assessments results for distance learning courses and programs should be part of every program's annual assessment summary, including the general education program. For courses that were taught both on-campus and through distance delivery, annual assessment results must be disaggregated to ensure that outcome attainment for on-campus and distance learning courses are comparable. For programs that are offered both on-campus and through distance delivery, annual assessment results for graduates must be disaggregated to ensure that outcome attainment for on-campus and distance learning degree recipients are comparable.

2.4.2. Comprehensive Program Review (CPR)

For programs that are offered both on-campus and through distance delivery, assessment results for graduates must be disaggregated in the CPR self-study to ensure that outcome attainment for on-campus and distance learning degree recipients are comparable. The productivity, quality, and viability

of both on-campus and distance learning programs must be addressed separately in both the CPR self-study and in the CPR External review report.

2.5. Academic Policies Specific to Distance Learning Courses and Programs (approved by faculty April 29, 2011)

2.5.1. Verification of Participation

Online course developers and instructors must provide a substantive means of determining participation in a course to facilitate the accurate completion of the verification roster. An assignment, such as a syllabus quiz, or the assessment from the prepackaged learning module on using the course tools in GSW's Learning Management System (LMS) provided by OIIT, must be set for each course and must be due no more than 72 hours after the drop/add period ends.

2.5.2. Access to Course for Withdrawn Students

Online instructors must monitor course rosters in Banner Web in the same way they keep track of students in traditional classes, and disable the course access of any student who withdraws themselves or is administratively withdrawn as they would keep such students from attending traditional classes. Re-enabling course access for administratively withdrawn students follows the same procedures as for students administratively withdrawn from traditional classes. A weekly check of course rosters in Banner should allow compliance with this policy.

2.5.3. Course Syllabus

Online instructors must provide a course syllabus that mirrors the syllabus used in face-to-face classes, but which highlights the difference of learning strategy inherent in the online course, and specified on the online version of the course outline. For instance, it must be clear to a student how they will get answers to questions they would normally pose during a class meeting, or how substantive participation in the online class will be measured and assessed.

2.5.4. Verification of Identity

Online course developers and instructors must demonstrate that the student who registers in a distance or correspondence education course or program is the same student who participates in and completes the course or program and receives the credit by verifying the identity of a student who participates in class or coursework by using, at the option of the instructor, methods such as (1) a secure login and pass code, (2) proctored examinations, and (3) new or other technologies and practices that are effective in verifying student identification.

2.6. Distance Learning Legal Policies

2.6.1. Fair Use

Distance learning courses that involve the performance and display of audiovisual and other copyrighted works are guided by the Educational Fair Use Guidelines for Distance Learning. See the webpage of the [Copyright Advisory Office](#) at the Columbia University library for guidance on Fair Use Law. This site

includes a useful [Fair Use Checklist](#). Use of copyrighted material is also governed by the University System of Georgia's [Policy on Use of Copyrighted Work in Education and Research](#).

2.6.2. Intellectual Property

Ownership and copyrighting of distance learning courses are subject to the provisions of GSW's Intellectual Property Policy [add link when ready].

2.7. BUDGET

Distance learning courses at the GSW are financed through the same budgeting process used for other university courses and are controlled at the department level.

3 TEACHING DISTANCE LEARNING COURSES

As noted above, all policies and procedures that apply to the teaching on-campus courses and programs apply to distance learning courses and programs, as well, unless specifically stipulated otherwise.

3.1. FACULTY

The faculty teaching distance learning course are assigned from the pool of GSW faculty and thus meet the same criteria as teachers for campus-based courses in the areas of academic credentials, workloads, and accessibility to students. Curriculum Vitæ for all faculty members, including credentials for teaching distance learning courses are on file in the Office of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Priority for teaching distance learning courses is given to full-time faculty. If utilized, adjunct faculty must be reviewed and approved as possessing a combination of appropriate academic credentials and experience in the discipline in which the course is being taught. Any faculty member developing a distance learning course is given first priority in teaching that course. Another faculty member may use a faculty member's course only if written permission is obtained from the faculty member who developed the course. [This is a problem that needs to be worked out—comply with intellectual property policy. It is beyond my pay grade.]

3.1.1. Workload

Faculty workload is described in the [GSW Faculty Handbook](#). Credit hours or contact time in distance learning courses are calculated as part of the faculty member's regular workload, and on the same basis.

3.1.2. Faculty Expenses

Faculty may incur expenses directly related to distance learning activities—such as long distance phone charges, postage, and mileage for travel to off-campus sites. In order for the appropriate budget to be charged, faculty must obtain prior approval from the appropriate department chairperson before such expenditures can be made.

3.1.3. Faculty-Student Interaction

Faculty teaching distance learning courses must provide students with an email address and a phone number. Each course introduction should contain an indication of how quickly students may expect a response. It is essential that distance learning courses provide an adequate system of interaction

between teacher and students. Other forms of communications could include, fax numbers, post office addresses and communication option available through the Learning Management System employed. In cases where there are class meetings (such as interactive compressed video), a period of time before or after class or during a break may be used to discuss more general concerns of distance learning students. Since regular and timely feedback from course instructor to student is crucial for the success of the distance learning program, faculty must provide an appropriate amount of feedback to distance learning students.

3.1.4. Faculty Development and Support

Faculty development and support are key to the long-term success of the distance learning program. Without the requisite skills and resources to adapt to new teaching and learning environments, faculty will be unable to respond to the demands of the distance learning program. GSW is committed to providing appropriate faculty support services specifically related to distance learning. Institutional support includes, but is not limited to, providing adequate and up-to-date technology, providing appropriate technical assistance, such as help and training, and compensating faculty for the development of courses designed to be delivered entirely by remote means, such as the Internet. Additionally, distance learning faculty meet together formally each semester to discuss issues related to the effectiveness of the program.

3.1.4.1 Learning Management System (LMS) Technical Support Procedures

- The Office of Information and Instructional Technology (OIIT) provides technical support to Faculty and Staff members who wish to use LMS.
- Each semester courses are automatically created in GaVIEW via the Banner process for every instructor who is teaching a course, whether it is an in-class or an on-line course. This will make it possible for instructors who are not teaching on-line courses to use LMS as a supplement to their traditional classes.
- OIIT offers online tutorials and workshops on LMS periodically as needed. These tutorials and workshops cover the various tools available to help organize and manage a LMS course, including file transfer, quiz management, posting course notes, managing students and use of the grade book. Participants are welcome to bring any items they need incorporated into their courses.
- Faculty members are responsible for setting up and maintaining their LMS sections, including uploading course content, creating quiz modules, and posting other instructional materials. OIIT will work with faculty members to ensure that they have the ability to perform these duties through workshops and one-on-one training, as needed. OIIT will also keep faculty members informed of developments opportunities offered by the USG Faculty Development office.
- Support for LMS is available on a 24x7 basis via the D2L Help Center. This link is available on the LMS log in page. This Center is designed to answer all of your questions regarding LMS from a Designer, Instructor, or Student perspective. This service can be accessed anytime, from anywhere. The on-line support center has technicians standing by to answer questions online

via online chat or phone. They also have an extensive knowledge base that offers information and solutions for commonly asked questions or frequent problems encountered by LMS users.

- Information and instructions on how to log in to GaVIEW D2L
- Browser checker on the GaVIEW login page
- GaVIEW Student Orientation
- Faculty Resources page with tutorials, useful links, and faculty development materials
- D2L Help Center and GSW GaVIEW help links
- Downloads page with the downloadable software
- GaVIEW Maintenance schedule
- Link to the Respondus (third party software) website
- Announcements - This section will inform faculty/staff and students of any updates concerning GaVIEW
- There are also Desire2Learn tutorials available after logging in to GaVIEW including the following on-line courses:
 - D2L Self Paced Tutorial for faculty
 - D2L Student Tutorial for students
- OIIT offers technical support by phone and email and will work with faculty members to resolve any problems they encounter with LMS. The contact information is as follows:

Contact: Alla Yemelyanov

Phone: 229-931-2969 or 229-931-2074

Email: gaview@gsu.edu

3.1.5. Faculty Evaluation

Faculty members are evaluated according to the guidelines presented in the [GSW Faculty Handbook](#). These procedures include both course evaluations by students and supervisor evaluations handled within the individual departments. Annual supervisor evaluations are typically based upon student course evaluations, and class observations by supervisors or peers. While distance education courses can be evaluated by students in the largely the same way as traditional face-to-face classes, observation by supervisors and peers is more challenging, but not impossible. For supervisor observation, access to a course will be provided by the LMS administrator for a specified period of time that has been mutually determined by the Faculty and Supervisor. The results of these formative evaluations will be recorded on the Distance Education Faculty Evaluation Rubric (see appendix.), and will be used by supervisors during the annual evaluation process. Faculty who teach both face-to-face and distance learning classes should have both learning media addressed separately in their annual evaluation. Supervisors may

delegate such observations to an experienced distance education instructor who is part of the full time faculty or who directs distance learning for the academic unit. Peer observations will require the faculty member to give a peer access to their course for a specified period of time. The results of these peer observations will be recorded on the Distance Education Faculty Evaluation Rubric (link), and should be submitted as part of the faculty member's annual self-evaluation. As noted in the GSW Faculty Handbook, "annual evaluations provide the foundation for developing recommendations for promotion, tenure, salary increases, termination, and other tangible or intangible rewards."

3.1.6. CONTRACTS

All employment contracts for teaching distance learning classes follow normal university procedures as outlined in the GSW Faculty Handbook. In addition, individual academic units may require faculty who teach distance education classes to sign a Memorandum of Understanding that states specific expectations for distance education instruction (see sample MOU in appendix.).

3.1.7. OUTSIDE EMPLOYMENT/CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No GSW course may be offered by a faculty member for another college, university, agency or private corporation without the written permission of the Vice President for Academic Affairs. Additional guidelines concerning outside employment appear in the GSW Faculty Handbook (<http://gsw.edu/Academics/Academic-Affairs/Faculty-Handbook>).

3.2. Faculty Training

It is part of the support mission of the Office of Information and Instructional Technology to provide training for GSW's LMS. Face to face training is provided periodically during planning week and other times throughout the academic year. Faculty are advised of training opportunities through the faculty listserv. Training tutorials are also provided on the GeorgiaVIEW website: <http://gsw.edu/GeorgiaVIEW/Resources>.

First-time distance learning instructors should be assigned an experienced distance learning instructor as a mentor during their first semester teaching an online course. The mentor should be added to the course as a teaching assistant, so the mentor can observe and provide help as needed. Mentors will fill out a formative evaluation of the first-time distance learning instructor at the end of the first semester of online teaching. In addition, first-time distance learning instructors will be observed again during their second semester teaching distance learning courses to provide opportunities for further formative feedback.

Faculty training opportunities in all aspects of teaching and learning, including distance education, are also available through the University System of Georgia Office of Faculty Development: <http://www.usg.edu/facultyresources/>.